

**What is claimed is:**<sup>1</sup>  
~~72.~~

(Amended) An isolated nucleic acid comprising any one of the following:

- (a) a nucleic acid sequence encoding a polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:16;
- (b) a nucleic acid sequence at least 90% identical to the nucleic acid sequence of (a) above;
- (c) a nucleic acid encoding a polypeptide wherein the polypeptide has conservative amino acid substitutions to the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:16; or
- (d) a fragment of the nucleic acid sequence of (a) or (b) above wherein the fragment comprises at least 20 nucleotides.

<sup>2</sup>  
~~73.~~The nucleic acid of claim ~~72~~, wherein said nucleic acid is selected from the group consisting of DNA and RNA.<sup>3</sup>  
~~74.~~(Amended) The nucleic acid of claim ~~72~~, wherein said nucleic acid comprises an open reading frame that encodes a polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:16 or its complement, or a mutant or variant thereof.<sup>4</sup>  
~~75.~~(Amended) The nucleic acid of claim ~~72~~, wherein said nucleic acid encodes a polypeptide comprising an amino acid of SEQ ID NO:16 or its complement.<sup>5</sup>  
~~76.~~(Amended) The nucleic acid of claim ~~74~~ wherein the nucleic acid encodes a mature form of a polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence that is SEQ ID NO:16.<sup>6</sup>  
~~77.~~(Amended) The nucleic acid of claim ~~75~~ wherein said nucleic acid encodes a polypeptide comprising an amino acid of SEQ ID NO:16, a mutant or variant thereof.<sup>7</sup>  
~~78.~~An oligonucleotide sequence that is complementary to and hybridizes under stringent conditions with the nucleic acid of claim ~~72~~, a variant or mutant thereof.<sup>8</sup>  
~~79.~~(Amended) The oligonucleotide sequence of claim ~~78~~ which is complementary to at least a portion of the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:15, its complement, or a mutant or variant thereof.<sup>9</sup>  
~~80.~~An isolated nucleic acid comprising a nucleotide sequence complementary to at least a portion of a nucleic acid according to claim ~~74~~.<sup>10</sup>  
~~81.~~A vector comprising the nucleic acid of claim ~~72~~.

<sup>11</sup>  
~~82.~~ A cell comprising the vector of claim <sup>10</sup>~~81~~.

<sup>12</sup>  
~~83.~~ (Amended) The cell of claim <sup>11</sup>~~82~~ wherein said cell is a prokaryotic or eukaryotic cell comprising the nucleic acid sequence which is SEQ ID NO:15, its complement, or a mutant or variant thereof.

<sup>13</sup>  
~~84.~~ A pharmaceutical composition comprising the nucleic acid of claim <sup>1</sup>~~72~~ and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

<sup>14</sup>  
~~85.~~ (Amended) A process for producing a polypeptide encoded by the nucleic acid of claim <sup>1</sup>~~72~~, said process comprising:

- a) providing a cell comprising a vector comprising the nucleic acid of claim <sup>1</sup>~~72~~;
  - b) culturing said cell under conditions sufficient to express said polypeptide; and
  - c) recovering said polypeptide,
- thereby producing said polypeptide.

<sup>15</sup>  
~~86.~~ The process of claim <sup>14</sup>~~85~~ wherein said cell is a prokaryotic or eukaryotic cell.

<sup>16</sup>  
~~87.~~ A process for identifying a compound that binds the nucleic acid of claim <sup>1</sup>~~72~~, the process comprising:

- a) contacting said nucleic acid with a compound; and
- b) determining whether said compound binds said nucleic acid sequence.

<sup>17</sup>  
~~88.~~ The compound identified by the process of claim <sup>16</sup>~~87~~.